UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

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ARCHITECTURAL TREND OF FUTURE FOREST SERVICE BUILDINGS

1940

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Architectural Trend of future Forest Service Buildings

Architectural Trend

The external design of Forest Service buildings calls for a much greater display of imagination and inventive genius than heretofore in order to give them sufficient individual character to definitely express their purpose and the particular Federal Agency to which they belong This matter sadly neglected in the past demands special consideration together with the most serious thought and study on the part of the designer This field of design is full of unusual possibilities

The almost universal practice now commonly in vogue in a number of Regions of always employing the conventional urban styles of architecture for Forest Service buildings generally could be discontinued advantageously for styles which are more expressive of the Forest Service itself and at the same time more appropriate to the diverse conditions respective locations and particular environments in which they are to be erected

Before discussing this subject it seems only proper to state that the Forest Service structures of the past few years have shown a marked improvement over former ones not only in general design but more especially in plan

Furthermore progress in better planning has not been confined solely to improving the arrangement, accommodations facilities and modern conveniences of individual buildings but it has advanced to the fundamental consideration of comprehensive planning for groups of buildings a primary matter which logically comes first

Elevational design however has not kept pace with the progress made in planning except in one Re ion where despite numerous di r panci in plan the building are characterized by attractive elevations

The photograph of a Conventional Urban Design in a rural environment is shown not because it is unattractive or lacking in interest but because it corresponds with and is typical of private dwellings rather than representative of the Forest Service Where no comparison is made or when judged solely by ordinary standards this dwelling would be considered good and accepted as such without further comment

A Conventional Urban Design
in a Rural Environment

Even where due to propinquity conventional urban designs may be fitting ipso facto they are still far from satisfactory as an expression of the Forest Service In fact they often correspond so closely in general character to adjacent buildings they are unrecognizable as Federal buildings except by those employed therein or living in the immediate vicinity

Having no particular association with Forest Service traditions, ideals and purposes they are not considered representative and lacking this identity, they receive much well-founded adverse criticism

A recognition of this fact indicates conclusively that buildings of a more distinctive character are in demand based upon designs which both more adequately express the purposes of the Forest Service and which are more appropriate to their particular locales This situation calls for an analysis of the architectural trend of future buildings for Administrative Sites throughout the Forest Service as a whole

Therefore the problem is obviously the difficult one of imbuing Forest Service buildings with an individual architectural expression

Consequently the following pertinent remarks in connection with the design of future buildings are advanced by Engineering in an attempt to avoid or at least minimize, further adverse criticism

Quantity production lack of adequate design and drafting personnel insufficient time to seriously study elevational designs because of the pressure of immediate demands for hastily prepared plans to take advantage of unexpended balances at the end of the fiscal year etc have all resulted in the commonplace mediocre buildings to be found on every hand So-called Standard Plans were the outcome of this irrational procedure which fortunately is now almost entirely abandoned

The selection of a single acceptable and appropriate architectural style, satisfactory for all conditions and localities of any Region is also out of the question, due to the variety of purposes served by Forest Service buildings which include residences offices shops, warehouses laboratories, etc

No one architectural style can serve universally to adequately represent any particular Federal Agency because the country itself is too vast in extent and too varied in character to permit of it with any degree of success

For example, the Colonial Style is incongruous in Regions where due to traditional usage it has been found that the Mexican Spanish or Ranchhouse types are appropriate and practical The contrary is equally true

Again were it possible to adopt any one style for universal use or to develop one particular type for Forest Service buildings, it would immediately become monotonous and unpopular and, therefore, equally unsatisfactory

In certain Regions where a traditional architecture exerts a predominating influence the problem may be simplified by taking advantage of it Since all Regions are not fortunate enough to possess pronounced traditional architectural styles like those cited above, it is imperative to create entirely original designs based upon other typical less conspicuous regional prototypes, to accomplish the desired results

This requires a keener appreciation of respective sites and a special study of individual projects It necessitates a diligent search for those particular features which not only differentiate one site from another but also one Region from another Characteristic architectural motifs are often difficult to discern but once they are found they may be adopted and utilized for purposes of design in developing indigenous types of construction

The first step in achieving this is to zone the Region for architectural styles, based upon climatic characteristics diverse vegetation and forest cover This has been done very logically by Region 3 in the following manner

Type of Country	Style of Architecture
Desert or semi-desert	Adobe or Pueblo
Grassland	Ranchhouse type
Woodland - pine fir or spruce	Timber type
Alpine	Alpine type - stone or stone and rough timbers

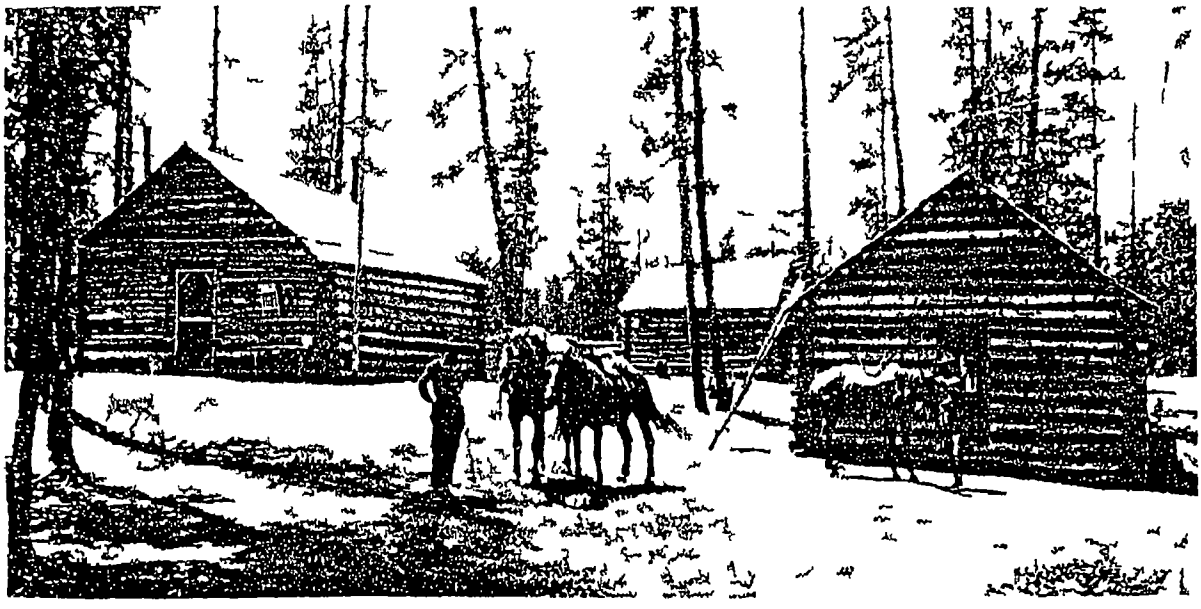
These general classifications represent a reasonable subdivision of Region 3 into localities typified by different natural features and a respective type of design appropriate to each

When the elevations of buildings composing Administrative Sites Service Groups etc are designed in accordance with these primary considerations they will be neither monotonous inappropriate nor lacking in those characteristics which are thoroughly representative of the Forest Service itself

Ultimately logical classifications of this sort will be found of great assistance in determining elevational design based upon the use of acceptable appropriate types of architecture

Log Buildings

Log buildings, primitive in character and associated with the early history of our country bespeak the forests themselves In certain sections of several northern Regions low one-story structures, built entirely of logs or a combination of logs and stone have been customary for generations



Beaver Creek Ranger Station
Payette National Forest R-4

As in former times the Forest Service still builds many distinctive log structures in Regions 1 2 4and 6 In continuin to erect them it performs a highly laudable undertaking in perpetuating the art and traditions of log work in this country despite the fact that the craftsmanship required to cut and fit the logs involves greater expense than that of other forms of wood construction

Since buildings of this type admittedly conform to the premises of this treatise they are accepted as appropriate for the Forest Service without further deliberation in localities where their erection agrees with common practice

Hence this discussion will deal primarily with other than log construction

Elevational Design

In order to confine attention exclusively to the subject of elevational design it is assumed that the fundamental considerations of utilitarian planning have been satisfied to the extent that the plans meet the requirements and function properly

The problem of designing buildings to definitely represent any particular Government Agency is a difficult one To discern those specific elements of design which may be construed as representative of the Forest Service exclusively and by means of which its buildings may always be recognized is indeed an arduous undertaking It calls for the exercise of the imagination and the ability to design rather than the plagarizing of designs prepared by others by selections from architectural magazines etc

This task necessitates a greater play of imagination by the introduction of such qualities a the quaint the naive the intimate the picturesque the provincial or primitive and other similar characteristic attributes, in contradistinction to the sophisticated formal and highly conventionalized classic adaptations now commonly employed

Design or the architectural treatment of structure signifies the introduction of beautification by art Ordinarily additional expenditures are anticipated in this process Often however the contrary is true The experienced designer is capable of designing by means of simplification and refinem nt rather than by the introduction of any additional features Th re is no reason why good design and economical construction should not be synonymous

To accomplish the results herein contemplated Forest Service buildings must emerge from ordinary commonplace structures to enter the realm of architecture

Practical Examples

To demonstrate how the recommendations set forth herein may be put into actual practice several examples may be cited Region 1 having become convinced of the necessity of improving the exteriors of its

buildings along the lines discussed herein undertook to design something more characteristic and appropriate for the Philipsburg Ranger Station than the designs formerly used

By reverting to the simple primitive types to be found on the farmsteads of Montana uncontaminated by any foreign influence it was found possible to arrive at an original design based upon indigenous prototypes

The long low rambling structures of the farm opposite to the site of the proposed Administrative Group on the outskirts of Philipsburg, Montana are typical of many others in this locality and were photographed for use in this connection

They appeared to possess a clue to a characteristic type of local building The countryside with its farm buildings usually provides the most valuable source material for this particular purpose

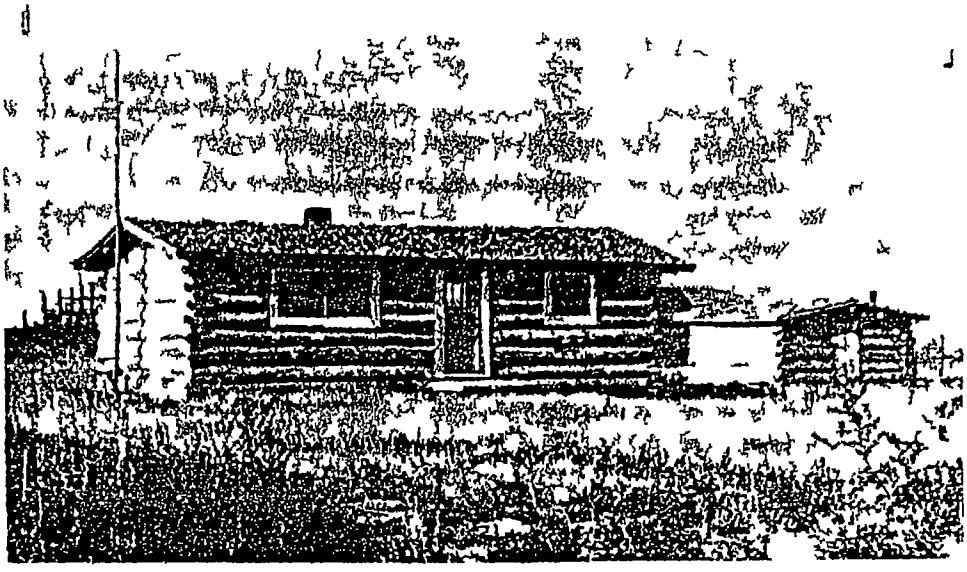
Typical rambling farmstead opposite the
Philipsburg Administrative Group Site

Incidentally in this photograph will be seen a mediocre two story frame dwelling, representative of the ordinary urban type of extraneous, inappropriate architecture, the duplication and repetition of which it is attempted to supply by Forest Service designs developed in accordance with the procedure outlined herein

The color, shape and height of this dwelling are incongruous in relation to both the immediate environment and the general landscape This lack of harmony offers a clue of what to avoid in subsequent designs for Forest Service buildings

By incorporating in these designs the significant architectural features to be found only in some of the older existing native structures, Region 1 is to be credited with unusual foresight and a keen appreciation of its native architecture which has not yet been sufficiently developed to be recognized as an established traditional style

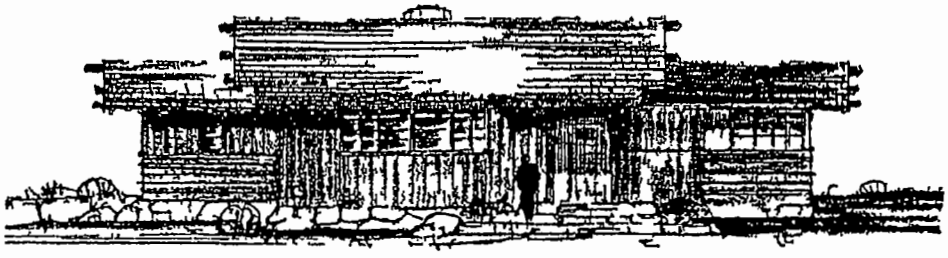
To search out conventionalize and adapt characteristic elements of design is always difficult especially where there is so little traditional architecture to draw upon and, consequently, very few motifs from which to choose



A Typical Montana Farm Dwelling

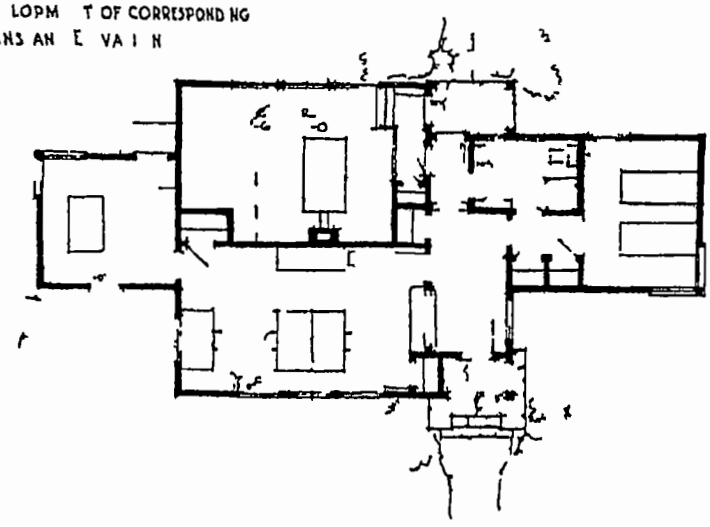
A representative prototype used as the source material for the following perspective sketches in designing the buildings comprising the Philipsburg Administrative Group

Differing radically from any other basic style in this country and in many respects closely resembling the primitive simplicity of the Alpine structures around the Zermatt, near the Italian-Swiss border it possesses unique stylistic possibilities

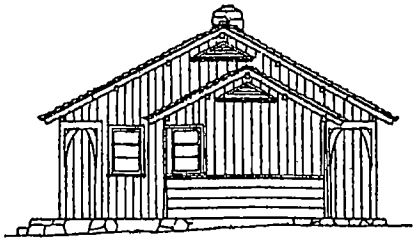


FRONT ELEVATION

PRELIMINARY STUDY
FLOOR PLAN CORRESPONDING
PLANS AND ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN
PRELIMINARY STUDY
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
PHILIPSBURG RANGER STATION
DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST



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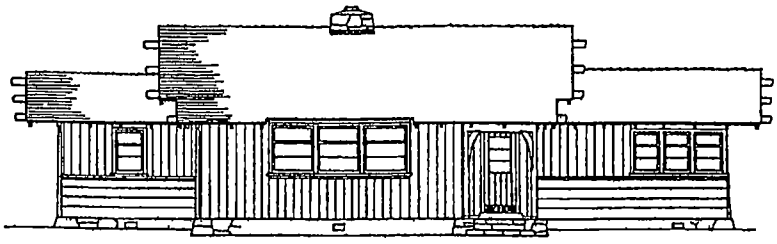

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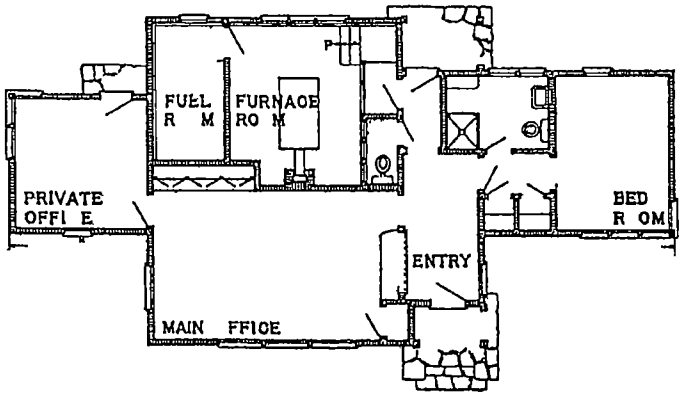


FLOOR PLAN

FINAL DRAWINGS

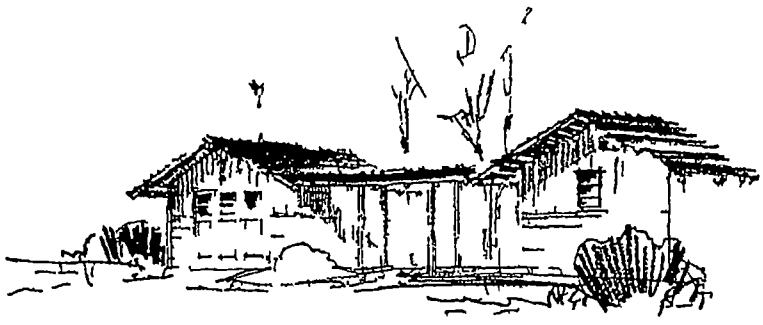
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

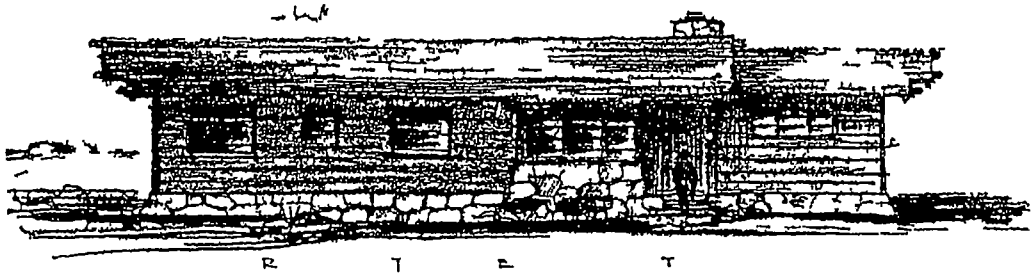
PHILIPSBURG RANGER STATION

DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST

REGION 1

PLAN NO B 109





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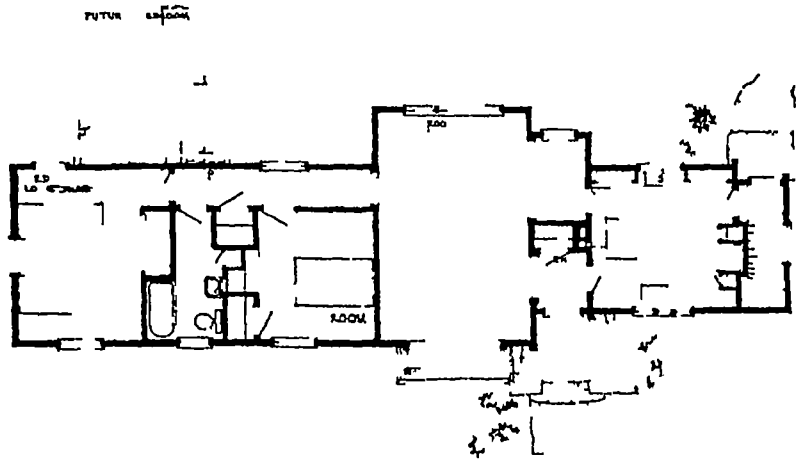


F L O O R P L A N

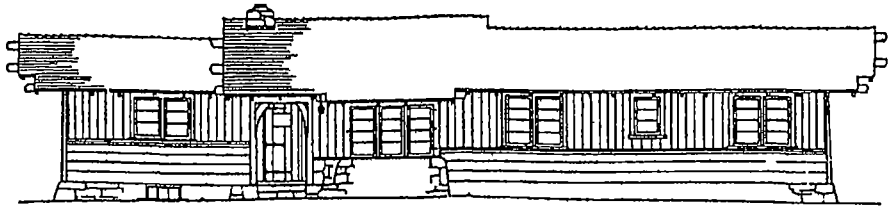
P R E L I M I N A R Y S T U D Y

RESIDENCE

PHILIPSBURG RANGER STATION

E NAT ONA FOREST

1



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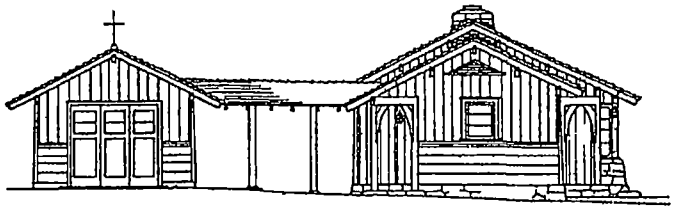

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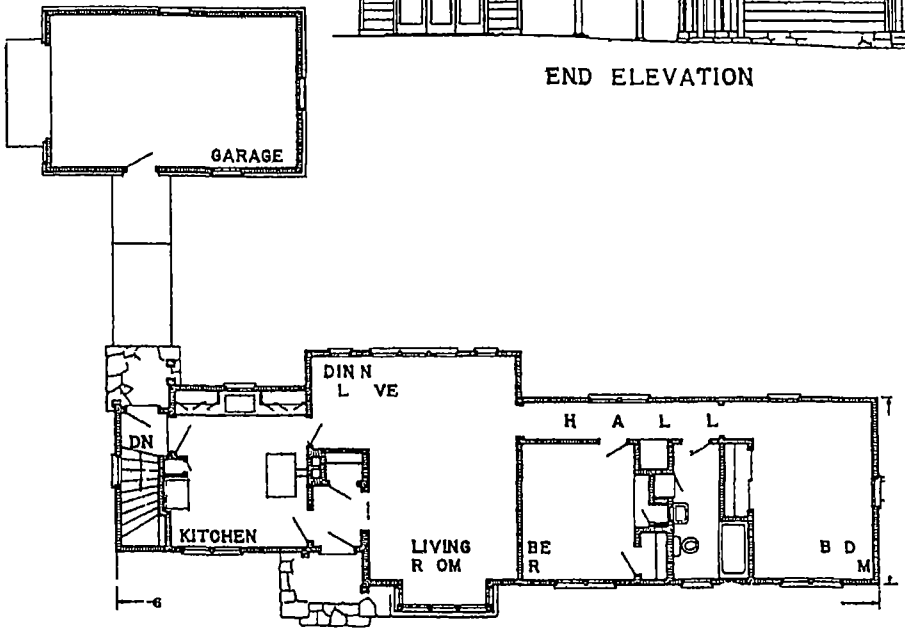


FLOOR PLAN

FINAL DRAWINGS

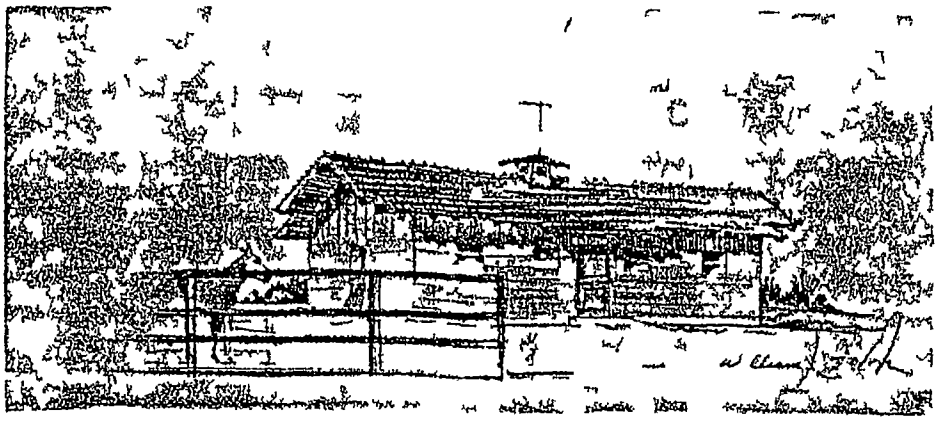
RESIDENCE

PHILIPSBURG RANGER STATION

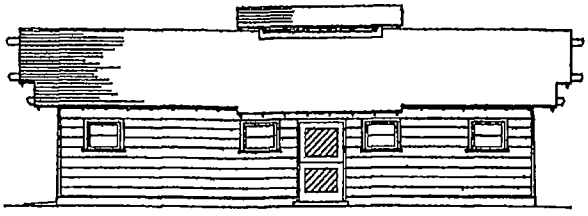
DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST

REGION 1

P AN NO B 10



PRELIMINARY SKETCH



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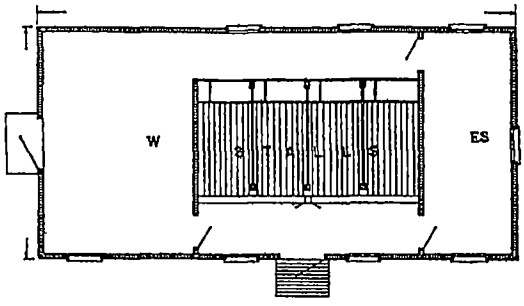


FLOOR PLAN

FINAL DRAWINGS

FOUR HORSE BARN

PHILIPSBURG RANGER STATION

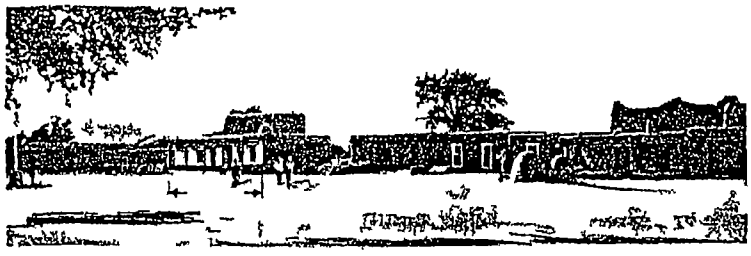
DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST

REGION 1

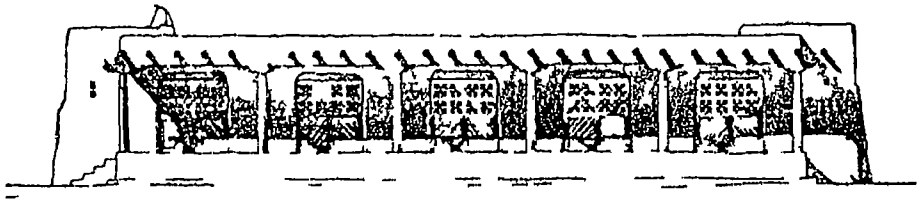
PLAN N B 3

Another example worthy of mention differs fundamentally from the previous one Here, Region 3 has taken advantage of an established traditional style the Adobe or Pueblo by employing it as the nucleus for the design of a number of its buildings at various locations

The photograph herewith represents a typical native Adobe structure and a Region 3 design for a Forest Service Warehouse conforming to it in basic design and traditional architectural character



Plaza -Indian Pueblo of San Ildefonso N Mex



Design for an Adobe
Forest Service Warehouse Region 3

It is to be observed that neither of the foregoing photographs bear any semblance to imported extraneous architectural styles

In the reproduction of the Plaza Pueblo of San Ildefonso may be seen an interesting architectural parallel of a porch motif represented by that portion indicated between arrows which may be considered as a traditional prototype for the recently designed adobe Forest Service Warehouse

In utilizing characteristic, traditional regional building motifs, by wisely adapting them in a practical manner to satisfy modern utilitarian requirements is design at its best